



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
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DA 19-356

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**WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUREAU SEEKS COMMENT ON OCEAN SIGNAL
LIMITED REQUEST FOR WAIVER TO PERMIT EQUIPMENT AUTHORIZATION AND USE
OF A PERSONAL LOCATOR BEACON (PLB) INCORPORATING AN AUTOMATIC
IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (AIS) LOCATING FUNCTION**

WT Docket No. 19-124

Comment Date: May 30, 2019

Reply Date: June 14, 2019

By this *Public Notice*, we seek comment on a request filed by Ocean Signal Limited (Ocean Signal) for waiver to permit the equipment authorization and use of a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) that incorporates Automatic Identification System (AIS)¹ functionality in compliance with a recently published Radio Technical Commission for Maritime Services (RTCM) standard.²

A PLB is a small portable transmitter that is intended to provide individuals in remote areas a means to alert others of an emergency situation and to aid search and rescue personnel to locate those in distress.³ PLBs must conform with the version of RTCM Standard 11010 that is incorporated by reference in the Commission's rules.⁴ RTCM has published a revised edition that permits AIS alerting in addition to homing on frequency 121.5 MHz.⁵

¹ AIS is a "maritime navigation safety communications system standardized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) that provides vessel information, including the vessel's identity, type, position, course, speed, navigational status and other safety-related information automatically to appropriately equipped shore stations, other ships, and aircraft; receives automatically such information from similarly fitted ships; monitors and tracks ships; and exchanges data with shore-based facilities." See 47 CFR § 80.5; see *Amendment of the Commission's Rules Regarding Maritime Automatic Identification Systems*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making and Fourth Memorandum Opinion and Order, 21 FCC Rcd 8892, 8894-8901, paras. 4-11 (2006).

² See Request by Ocean Signal Ltd. for Waiver of Part 95K of the Commission's Rules (dated July 23, 2018).

³ 47 CFR § 95.2903.

⁴ RTCM 11010.2, "406 MHz Satellite Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs)," including Amendments 1 and 2, dated June 8, 2012; see 47 CFR § 95.2989(b)(1).

⁵ RTCM 11010.3 for 406 MHz Satellite Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs), dated June 25, 2018. RTCM Standard 11010.3 is available at www.RTCM.org.

Ocean Signal believes that PLBs designed to the new RTCM standard will provide users with enhanced safety, as the addition of AIS in PLBs will provide increased location accuracy and enhance the ability of rescuing resources to locate persons in distress. Consequently, it seeks a waiver to permit equipment certification and use of PLBs with AIS alerting pursuant to the revised RTCM standard prior to that standard being incorporated into the Commission's rules.⁶

We seek comment on the waiver request. In particular, we ask commenters to address the potential effect on the integrity of AIS, which is primarily a maritime navigation system, of the addition of PLBs, which may be used on both land and water.⁷ We also request that commenters address the practicality and effectiveness of utilizing AIS for this function, for users on both land and water.

Procedural Matters

Interested parties may file comments and reply comments in response to the waiver request on or before the dates listed on the first page of this *Public Notice*. All pleadings must reference the docket number appearing on the first page of this *Public Notice*. Parties may file comments using (1) the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS), (2) the Federal Government's eRulemaking Portal, or (3) by filing paper copies.⁸

- **Electronic Filers:** File comments electronically using the Internet by accessing the ECFS: <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/> or the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Filers should follow the instructions provided on the website for submitting comments.
- **In completing the transmittal screen,** filers should include their full name, U.S. Postal Service mailing address, and the applicable docket or rulemaking number. Parties may also submit an electronic comment by Internet e-mail. To get filing instructions, filers should send an e-mail to ecfs@fcc.gov, and include the following words in the body of the message, "get form." A sample form and directions will be sent in response.
- **Paper Filers:** Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and one copy of each filing. If more than one docket or rulemaking number appears in the caption of this proceeding, filers must submit two additional copies for each additional docket or rulemaking number.

Send filings by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial overnight courier, or by first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail. Address filings to the Commission's Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.

- Deliver hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings to FCC Headquarters at 445 12th St., SW, Room TW-A325, Washington, DC 20554 between 8:00 AM and 7:00 PM. Use rubber bands or fasteners to hold deliveries together. Dispose of all envelopes before entering the building.
- Send commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) to 9050 Junction Drive, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701.

⁶ On August 20, 2018, RTCM filed a petition for rulemaking proposing the incorporation by reference of the revised RTCM PLB standard. Radio Technical Commission for Maritime Services Petition for rulemaking to amend Part 95 of the Commission's rules to provide for a new standard on Personal Locator Beacons, RM-11813 (filed Aug. 20, 2018), <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filing/1081900919860>. The petition was placed on *Public Notice*, August 23, 2018 (Report No. 3100, RM-11813). Comments to the *Public Notice* support the petition.

⁷ There are two categories of PLBs: Category 1 PLBs are designed for use in and around water (but in some circumstances can also be used on land) and must float. Category 2 PLBs are designed principally for use on land but may also be used in and around water if designed to be integrated with a Personal Lifesaving Appliance, and are not required to float. The revised RTCM standard permits both Category 1 and Category 2 PLBs to incorporate AIS functionality.

⁸ See *Electronic Filing of Documents in Rulemaking Proceedings*, Report and Order, 13 FCC Rcd 11322 (1998).

- Send U.S. Postal Service first-class, Express, and Priority mail to 445 12th St., SW, Washington DC 20554.

The request, and comments and reply comments filed in response to this *Public Notice* are available for viewing via the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) by entering the docket number appearing on the first page of this *Public Notice*. The documents also will be available for public inspection and copying during business hours in the FCC Reference Information Center, Portals II, 445 12th Street S.W., Room CY-A257, Washington, D.C. 20554. Reference Information Center business hours are available at <https://www.fcc.gov/general/fcc-reference-information-center>.

Alternate formats of this *Public Notice* (computer diskette, large print, audio recording, and Braille) are available to persons with disabilities by contacting the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530 (voice), (202) 418-0432 (TTY), or send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov.

This proceeding has been designated as a "permit-but-disclose" proceeding in accordance with the Commission's *ex parte* rules.⁹ Persons making *ex parte* presentations must file a copy of any written presentation or a memorandum summarizing any oral presentation within two business days after the presentation (unless a different deadline applicable to the Sunshine period applies). Persons making oral *ex parte* presentations are reminded that memoranda summarizing the presentation must (1) list all persons attending or otherwise participating in the meeting at which the *ex parte* presentation was made, and (2) summarize all data presented and arguments made during the presentation. If the presentation consisted in whole or in part of the presentation of data or arguments already reflected in the presenter's written comments, memoranda or other filings in the proceeding, the presenter may provide citations to such data or arguments in his or her prior comments, memoranda, or other filings (specifying the relevant page and/or paragraph numbers where such data or arguments can be found) in lieu of summarizing them in the memorandum. Documents shown or given to Commission staff during *ex parte* meetings are deemed to be written *ex parte* presentations and must be filed consistent with rule 1.1206(b). In proceedings governed by rule 1.49(f) or for which the Commission has made available a method of electronic filing, written *ex parte* presentations and memoranda summarizing oral *ex parte* presentations, and all attachments thereto, must be filed through the electronic comment filing system available for that proceeding, and must be filed in their native format (e.g., .doc, .xml, .ppt, searchable .pdf). Participants in this proceeding should familiarize themselves with the Commission's *ex parte* rules.

For further information, contact Mr. Tim Maguire of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Mobility Division, at (202) 418-2155, tim.maguire@fcc.gov.

Action by the Deputy Chief, Mobility Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau.

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⁹ See 47 CFR §§ 1.1200(a), 1.1206.